

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Preston

Address: Rigby Street, St Joseph's, Preston, Lancashire, PR1 5XL

Unique reference number (URN): 149314

Inspection report: 27 January 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	●
Expected standard	● ● ● ● ● ●
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

✓ Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- Met: The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- Not met: The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Strong standard ●

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

Pupils' personal development is a key priority at the school. Leaders ensure that all pupils experience a wide range of high-quality opportunities across the curriculum. They think carefully about how to address gaps in pupils' experiences and skills. Leaders make sure that all pupils, especially the most disadvantaged, benefit from the school's offer. This prepares pupils well for their next stage of education and later life. Pupils develop confidence and resilience. They also learn to reflect on their beliefs. Pupils understand right and wrong and consider the impact of their actions on others.

Leaders identify the key barriers that disadvantaged pupils face, especially those eligible for additional funding. They find creative ways to overcome these barriers. As a result, disadvantaged pupils typically flourish at the school because of leaders' highly effective work.

Pupils enjoy helping others and embrace opportunities to contribute to the wider life of the school. They take on many leadership roles, including reading champions, school council representatives, eco-councillors and faith leaders. Pupils also take part in activities that help them understand how to make a positive contribution to their local and wider community. They raise money for charities and participate in local events, such as Remembrance Day. Pupils take part in creative and cultural activities that broaden their experiences.

Pupils have a secure understanding of the fundamental British values. They use democratic processes to gather and consider different views. Pupils learn about different faiths and cultures. They recognise the richness these bring to modern society. Pupils celebrate the diversity within their own school and local community.

Pupils learn about the human life cycle and understand how their bodies change as they grow older. They know how to keep themselves safe in relationships, including online. Pupils also learn how to maintain their own and others' dignity.

Expected standard ●

Achievement

Expected standard ●

Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, typically achieve well compared with other pupils nationally. The school's latest outcomes in national tests show that most pupils are well prepared for their next stage of education. This is evident in the key stage 2 reading, writing and mathematics outcomes, as well as in the Year 1 phonics screening check. In addition, the secure multiplication knowledge that Year 4 pupils develop supports their learning in Year 5 and beyond.

Pupils recall much of their learning across the curriculum. They build a useful body of knowledge as they progress through the school. As a result, most Year 6 pupils are well prepared for the new challenges that they are likely to face at secondary school.

Some pupils' fluency in writing is not as well developed as it is in reading. This makes it more difficult for them to record their ideas or explain their learning.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Most pupils attend school regularly and arrive punctually. Some pupils' attendance, especially those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), has been a concern in previous years, but this has improved over time. Attendance is now in line with national averages for all groups of pupils. Leaders work closely with parents and carers when attendance begins to fall or when pupils are regularly late. They provide practical advice and support to secure improvement. Pupils recognise the value of attending school regularly to maximise their learning. They are keen to earn the rewards on offer for meeting leaders' high expectations.

Pupils behave well during lessons and as they move around the school. They focus on their learning and persevere when they find tasks more difficult. At breaktimes, pupils enjoy playing outside. They typically socialise well and show respect towards others.

Pupils willingly follow the rules and routines that leaders have established. They report any concerns about discriminatory behaviour. Leaders deal with these rare incidents thoroughly. Suspensions are used sparingly but appropriately. When required, leaders and staff follow agreed protocols to provide effective support for pupils who struggle to manage their behaviour, including some pupils with SEND who need reasonable adjustments.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

The curriculum is ambitious and well thought out. It helps pupils build on prior knowledge as they move from the Nursery Year to Year 6. Leaders carefully select activities and experiences that bring learning to life. They ensure that teachers have the knowledge they need to deliver the curriculum successfully. Reading is at the heart of the curriculum. Teachers use the school's phonics programme well to teach pupils to read.

Teachers accurately identify pupils who struggle to access the curriculum. They know which pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and typically provide the support that these and other disadvantaged pupils need. Teachers adapt classroom activities or resources when this is needed. Additional support, such as extra reading practice, is sharply focused. This helps pupils with SEND and other disadvantaged pupils to access the curriculum more easily.

Leaders check that teachers use consistent approaches in class. Pupils regularly recall, practise, apply and embed their knowledge. They typically develop their reading and mathematical knowledge more effectively than their writing. Leaders have recently introduced a new writing programme to improve how well teachers identify and address inaccuracies in pupils' letter formation. This work is at an early stage of development, so there is currently some inconsistency in how effectively teachers do this.

Early years

Expected standard 

Leaders have a secure understanding of the early years curriculum and how it underpins later learning. They make sure that staff prioritise children's language development and teach a wide range of vocabulary. Children benefit from the stories, songs and rhymes that staff share with them. They join in with enthusiasm.

Staff build warm and supportive relationships with children through high-quality interactions. Leaders also develop positive relationships with parents and carers. This helps parents to feel more confident in supporting their children's learning. Staff share useful information with families so that they can continue to support learning at home. Staff are well trained and provide the support that children need. Nursery staff help children to become increasingly independent and take account of their age and stage of development. This prepares children well for the Reception Year.

Children begin to learn how to use phonics to read words. Reading is prioritised in Reception Year so that children secure their phonics knowledge from the start. They build their reading knowledge securely, ready for learning in Year 1. Leaders provide suitable resources and activities to support children's development so that they can access the rest of the curriculum successfully. Children begin to learn how to write words. However, leaders do not ensure that all children develop accurate letter formation as well as they could.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders identify pupils' individual needs accurately and promptly. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), those who are disadvantaged and pupils who speak English as an additional language. Leaders review pupils' needs carefully and use this information to plan support. They make effective use of additional funding and other resources to remove barriers to learning and wellbeing.

Leaders check regularly how well pupils are progressing. They review the impact of the support that pupils receive and make adjustments, as necessary, to ensure that they are well supported. Leaders provide training and work with teachers to ensure that staff understand pupils' needs and how to meet them. Teachers recognise when pupils struggle and make suitable adjustments so that they can take part successfully. Most pupils with SEND learn alongside their peers. Pupils new to learning English benefit from timely, focused support that develops their understanding and use of language.

Leaders work closely with parents and carers and other agencies to shape the support pupils receive and to plan next steps.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders know their school and the community it serves well. They identify appropriate priorities and take action to address them. Leaders amend their plans when things are not working as well as they expect. They work closely with members of the local governing board and representatives from the trust. Those responsible for governance provide

effective support and challenge to leaders. They check that decisions are taken in pupils' best interests and evaluate the impact of current initiatives skilfully.

Leaders make sure that staff understand their role in addressing the school's priorities. They provide effective support for staff when improvements are needed. As a result, staff feel able to manage their workload effectively. They welcome the regular opportunities leaders provide to strengthen their professional development.

Members of the local governing board and the trust typically understand and uphold their statutory duties. Leaders ensure that they are kept informed about the work of the school. As a result, governors and trust members are well informed about the progress of school improvement work.

Leaders at all levels focus on making sure that disadvantaged pupils receive the support they need. They are generally successful in this work. However, in some cases, leaders do not ensure that bespoke timetables end as promptly as they should.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

The school is a welcoming place. Leaders make sure that pupils' differing needs are identified quickly when they join the school, whether in the early years or at other times. Pupils who face additional barriers to learning benefit from carefully considered support to help them overcome these. Staff address gaps in pupils' knowledge quickly and skilfully. As a result, disadvantaged pupils and most pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities flourish at the school.

Children settle quickly in the early years. Caring and well-trained staff help children develop their ability to communicate their needs and ideas. This prepares them well to interact successfully with others and to be ready for their learning as they move through the school.

Pupils typically achieve well across the curriculum. Most attend school regularly and on time, which helps them experience success. Pupils enjoy their learning and participate in lessons with enthusiasm. Leaders make sure that the curriculum and other opportunities prepare pupils effectively for their next stages of education and for later life.

Pupils behave well. They appreciate the need for rules and routines. Pupils are considerate and courteous. They understand how this contributes to a calm and harmonious community for all. Pupils feel safe at school. They know who to speak to if they have any worries and trust staff to deal with the rare incidents of unacceptable behaviour, including bullying.

Pupils access a wide range of clubs, trips and other opportunities that strengthen their understanding and their learning about the wider world. Many also take on leadership roles to support others. For example, reading champions share their favourite books with younger pupils, which enhances their enjoyment of reading.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that teachers identify and address errors in pupils' letter formation so that pupils can develop greater fluency in their written work.
 - Leaders should ensure that temporary part-time attendance arrangements have clear end points and are reviewed regularly with parents and carers so that pupils do not miss important learning.
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About this inspection

This school is part of Mater Ecclesiae Catholic Multi-Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Peter Duffy, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Roger Mason.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher and other leaders during the inspection. An inspector spoke with a group of governors, including the chair of the local governing board. They spoke with representatives from the trust, including the chair of the board of trustees, the CEO and the director of education. An inspector spoke with a representative from the local authority and from the diocese.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school does not currently make use of alternative provision for pupils.

Headteacher: Catherine Monaghan

Lead inspector:

Claire Cropper, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Cleo Cunningham, Ofsted Inspector

Rachel Pars, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.



This data is from 27 January 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

347

Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 272

School capacity

315

Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

33.87%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 26.3%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

1.73%

Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

7.20%

Well below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Well above average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standards in a combined reading, writing and mathematics measure.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average		61%	
2024/25 (revised)	78%	62%	Above
2023/24 (final)	41%	61%	Below
2022/23		60%	

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average		74%	
2024/25 (revised)	80%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	59%	74%	Below
2022/23		73%	

Pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average		72%	
2024/25 (revised)	78%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	61%	72%	Below
2022/23		71%	

Pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average		73%	
2024/25 (revised)	82%	74%	Above
2023/24 (final)	63%	73%	Below
2022/23		73%	

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average		46%	
2024/25 (revised)	63%	47%	Above
2023/24 (final)	25%	46%	Below
2022/23		44%	

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average		62%	

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	63%	63%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	55%	62%	Close to average
2022/23		60%	

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average		59%	
2024/25 (revised)	63%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	45%	58%	Below
2022/23		58%	

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average		60%	
2024/25 (revised)	68%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	50%	59%	Close to average
2022/23		59%	

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference

between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics, including the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average		68%	
2024/25 (revised)	63%	69%	-6 pp
2023/24 (final)	25%	67%	-42 pp
2022/23		66%	

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average		80%	
2024/25 (revised)	63%	81%	-18 pp
2023/24 (final)	55%	80%	-25 pp
2022/23		78%	

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average		78%	
2024/25 (revised)	63%	78%	-15 pp
2023/24 (final)	45%	78%	-33 pp
2022/23		77%	

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average		80%	
2024/25 (revised)	68%	81%	-12 pp
2023/24 (final)	50%	79%	-29 pp
2022/23		79%	

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	6.1%	5.2%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	6.6%	5.5%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	6.2%	5.9%	Close to average

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	16.8%	13.3%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	18.8%	14.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	17.6%	16.2%	Close to average

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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